



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

May 23, 2017

Remembering on Memorial Day

In early 2016 I had the opportunity to tour the Sparta School District's STEM school with Lieutenant Governor Rebecca Kleefisch to highlight the educational focus of the Rural Wisconsin Initiative. After the tour, we had a conversation with some of the students and discussed what their futures may hold. One of the students indicated that she was interested in a future in law or political science. As such, I invited the student to visit me at the State Capitol in Madison. The idea behind extending the invite was to provide a job shadow experience in state government. A number of weeks went by, and finally the day of the student's visit came. Her grandfather drove her to Madison and was able to join us for the day's events.

Before we started, we met in my office. I asked the student if she had any questions for me and she asked me what had helped me to prepare for my job serving the people of Wisconsin. I looked across the table at her grandfather, who wore a small American flag on his jacket. Prior to answering her question about my background, I asked her grandfather to tell me more about *his* background. I knew her grandfather had to be a patriot from the flag he wore on his lapel.

I was subsequently humbled by the grandfather's response. He talked about his time in the military serving our country. He also recalled his fellow soldiers and friends, some of whom did not return from battle. In addition, he discussed how we can memorialize and continue to remember those who have died in service.

After the grandfather was done speaking about his background, I explained to the young student that the service of men and women like her grandfather is what allows me to represent Wisconsin citizens. It is the protection of our freedoms and our society that preserves our way of life. I encouraged her to hold her grandfather's powerful words close to her heart.

For the wonderful grandfather, every day is Memorial Day as he keeps the memory alive of the soldiers he served with that gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country. For other grandfathers and grandmothers, fathers, mothers, and children, there is the memory of those that they served with or that made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Those from younger generations have those they remember as well, be it a former classmate, friend, family member, or someone else close to them.

On Memorial Day, we must remember those that sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy. We must remember those that allow us to pursue the professional pursuits we desire. We must remember those that allow us to safely spend time with our families and even travel safely with our families on extended weekends. We must remember those that afford us the freedom to express our opinions



NANCY VANDERMEER

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 70TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

freely. And we absolutely must remember those that gave their lives to preserve the constitutional republic and sacred institutions of these United States. As the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. states, "Freedom Is Not Free."